

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ADP-00 INR-10 SSO-00 NSC-10

USIE-00 PM-07 SS-15 RSC-01 INRE-00 NSAE-00 IO-13

DPW-01 L-03 H-03 AID-20 PA-03 PRS-01 RSR-01 /138 W

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O R 161150Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5411

INFO WHITE HOUSE

CIA

DIA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMZRSSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PHNOM ENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

CINCPAC

CINCUSARPAC

CINCPACAF

CINCPACFLT

DEPCJUSMAGTHAI

CDR USSAG NKP

CDR 13 AF ADVON UDORN

USDEL JEC PARIS

SECDEF

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 5710

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PGOV, PINS, PINT, PFOR, GE

SUBJECT: THE LAO CEASEFIRE - 25TH WEEK

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REF: VIENTIANE 5560

I. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

A. LAOS EXPERIENCED DECREASED LEVEL OF COMBAT ACTIVITY DURING 25TH WEEK OF CEASEFIRE. ONLY SIX MINOR AND FIVE MAJOR INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED; THREE OF THE MAJOR INCIDENTS WERE ENEMY-INITIATED. MR'S THREE AND FOUR CONTINUED TO BE MOST ACTIVE REGIONS. ACTIVITY CONTINUES IN MR FOUR NORTHEAST OF KHONG SEDONE, BUT AT LOWER LEVEL THAN PREVIOUS WEEK.

B. RLAf FLEW ONE AC-47 AND NINE T-28 SORTIES AGAINST ENEMY POSITIONS AND TROOP CONCENTRATIONS, MOSTLY IN MR THREE.

II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

A. DURING THE 25TH WEEK OF THE LAO CEASEFIRE, AGREEMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTING PROTOCOL SEEMED WITHIN GRASP, WITH INDICATIONS THAT IT MIGHT AT LEAST BE INTIALED BY AUGUST 15 OR 16. HOWEVER, RLG MILITARY AND OTHER CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS HAVE URGED SOME FURTHER DELAY AND DATE FOR SIGNING HAS RECEDED. NEGOTIATIONS DURING THE WEEK CONTINUED ON NEARLY DAILY BASIS, AND PRIMIN TOOK A MORE DIRECT AND ACTIVE ROLE IN NEGOTIATIONS, HIGHLIGHTED AUGUST 14 BY STORMY FOUR-HOUR SESSION WITH TWO SENIOR NEGOTIATORS FROM EACH SIDE. AT THAT SESSION, PRIMIN ADVANCED TO LPF SEVERAL NEGOTIATING DEMANDS OF FAR WHICH LPF REJECTED. SOUVANNA AND PHOUMI MET AGAIN MORNING AUGUST 16 FOR ONE HOUR. OFFICIAL LAO PRESSE REPORTED THAT THE TWO SOUGHT TO "IRON OUT LAST DIFFERENCES THAT BLOCK SIGNATURE OF THE PROTOCOL."

B. BOTH THE PRIME MINISTER AND SENIOR LAO NEGOTIATOR PHENG OHONGSAVAN HAVE TALKED ABOUT THE NEED TO ARRIVE AT A "LAO SOLUTION" AND NOT TO RUSH THINGS UNNECESSARILY JUST TO MEET A DEADLINE. PHENG WAS QUOTED AS SAYING ON AUGUST 9 THAT A PERMANENT PEACE IN LAOS IS NOT POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF THE ARMY, AND

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THE PRIME MINISTER SAID ON AUGUST 13 THAT THE SOLUTION FINALLY AGREED UPON MUST BE ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES AND THAT THEREFORE "IT IS NOT A GOOD IDEA TO BE IN A HURRY."

C. NONETHELESS, THE DELAY, IF PROLONGED, MIGHT INTERRUPT THE MOMENTUM THAT HAS BEEN ATTAINED IN THE PAST COUPLE OF WEEKS. SOUVANNA HAS IN THE LAST TWO DAYS REPORTEDLY THREATENED TO RESIGN UNLESS NEGOTIATIONS

ARE CONCLUDED BY THE END OF THE MONTH. IF TRUE, THIS
MAY BE A PRESSURE TACTIC ON BOTH THOSE RLG CONSERVATIVES
AND LPF WHO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT SOUVANNA IS AN INDESPENSIBLE
ELEMENT OF A LAO SETTLEMENT.

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